

*Washington Park Arboretum*

# BULLETIN

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**ABOVE:** The Arboretum's spring floor is spangled with the blooms of *Trillium ovatum* and other Pacific Northwest native plants. (Photograph by Stephanie Jeter)

**ON THE COVER:** The region's public gardens offer stunning vignettes of spring-flowering plants. Richard A. Brown, executive director of Bainbridge Island's Bloedel Reserve, photographed a glen in the Reserve filled with Japanese primroses (*Primula japonica*), their spiky stems and flowers set off by the broad leaves of Western skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*).

# Spring in Uncertain Times

There is no way around saying it: it has been a hard winter. We have seen it all—deep freezes, heavy rains and floods, blankets of snow, icy glazes on branches, streets, and sidewalks. And it shows in our gardens: toppled state champion trees here in the Arboretum, limbs snapped off broadleaf evergreens in our home gardens, gelatinous piles of last year's glories in our perennial borders, the complete loss of winter crops in our vegetable gardens. A stroll among the ruins can leave one quite glum.

But the news indoors has not necessarily brought much respite. Every week there has been more bad news to absorb—bank failures, company closures, job losses, another drop in the stock markets. Even my favorite source of winter cheer, attending the Northwest Flower and Garden Show, was a source of uncertainty this year as we walked out the doors not knowing if there would ever be another one.

There is a sense of insecurity and fear that creeps into conversations with old friends. How bad will it get? How long will it last?

Will it ever be normal again in my lifetime or is this “the new normal?”

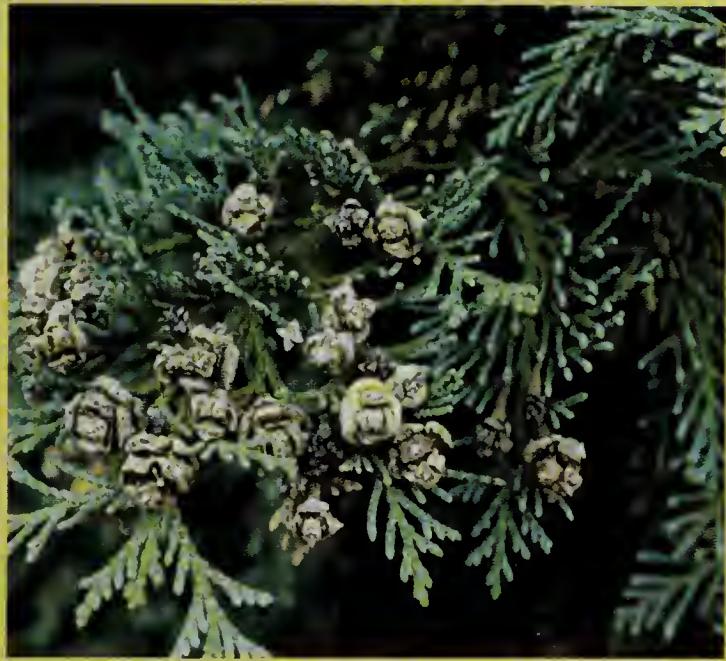
And just when the dark and the gloom have done their worst, you pause and think. The days are getting longer. Across Arboretum Drive in the Witt Winter Garden, the witch hazels and viburnums are pouring forth their magic on a sunny day. The little *reticulata* irises and species crocuses are up and smiling. Amid the flattened, old leaves of the hellebores, the new flowers are poking out. Yes, spring with its promise of warmth and renewal is on its way. If the economy is precarious and uncertain, there is solace in the rhythm of the seasons and the knowledge that once again spring will bring the opportunity to plant and to weed, to rest in the sun, and to look forward to summer's bounty. ~

Cheers to you all,  
*Paige Miller*  
Paige Miller, Executive Director,  
Arboretum Foundation



# Plants for the Arboretum's Cascadia Forest

BY PHIL WOOD AND BOB LILLY



*L*iving in the Pacific Northwest, we are surrounded by tall, dark evergreens that seep into our unconscious and shelter below them a multitude of textures and ephemeral blooms. As designers, we drew upon these iconic images when

creating "Entry to Cascadia," the Arboretum Foundation display garden at the 2009 Northwest Flower and Garden Show.

We chose plants for the show garden from the list of plants generated for the Cascadia Forest currently being built as part of the

**ABOVE:** Plants for the Arboretum's Cascade Forest. Clockwise from top left: *Berberis aquifolium*, by Craig Big Eagle; *Darlingtonia californica*, by Noah Elhardt, licensed under GNU Free Documentation License; *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*; and *Ribes sanguineum* 'White Icicle,' by Joseph Abken.



Arboretum's new Pacific Connections Garden (PCG). When the PCG is completed, it will feature plants from five eco-geographic regions around the Pacific Ocean: Chile, Australia, New Zealand, China and our own Cascadia.

The PCG is the first garden to be installed in the Arboretum since its new master plan was adopted in 2000. The Arboretum's original plan, prepared in 1936 by the Olmsted Brothers landscape firm, placed plants in taxonomic groups—for example, the oaks were planted in one area, while the pines were grouped together in another. The new master plan sites plants as they are found in distinct eco-geographic regions in the natural landscape; it also recreates plant communities, or associations, as they are found in natural eco-

geographic regions. Compare this change in arranging plant communities to the changes you see at Woodland Park Zoo. Several decades ago, all of the animals were grouped by species—felines in one house, bears in adjoining pits—but now some of them are displayed together in eco-geographic exhibits, such as an African savannah. This design approach means we all can start to learn, beginning with our childhood visits to the Zoo and the Arboretum, how the world is put together—one community at a time.

Because its geography is a complicated patchwork of landforms and water, the Pacific Northwest offers diverse microclimates filled with many plant associations. The PCG's Cascadia Forest will focus on plants from the

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**ABOVE LEFT:** The dainty flowers of salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), a Pacific Northwest native. **UPPER RIGHT:** *Picea engelmannii* grows in upper elevations in the Siskiyou Mountains. **LOWER RIGHT:** The broadleaf evergreen *Umbellularia californica* appears at mid-elevation in the Siskiyous.



Siskiyou Mountains in southwest Oregon, an area of great bio-diversity with many endemic plants (i.e., those that grow only in the Siskiyous).

As important as plants are to landscapes and gardens, a good garden needs an underlying structure. All gardens benefit from good bones—the hardscape—whether it consists of natural stone and watercourses or of human-made features that hold the design together. For the show garden, we designed a stone circle and a path leading into a forest, borrowing from a similar feature installed at the recently completed first phase of the Arboretum's Cascadia Forest.

Plants for the PCG will be grown from seed collected in the wild by the Arboretum's

plant collections manager, Randall Hitchin, and his team, and grown in the greenhouses at the Center for Urban Horticulture by plant propagator Barbara Seleton and her crew. Because we did not have the time to grow our plants from scratch for the show garden, we obtained them from nurseries.

In the planting design for the show garden, we emulated the plant placements and associations found in the plan for the Cascadia Forest, which in turn mirrors the way plants grow in the Siskiyous. We placed conifers at the highest elevation, mixed conifers and broadleaf evergreens at mid-elevation, and chaparral, a mix of small shrubs, at the lowest elevation.

The conifer specimens that we used at the show were relatively small. These same

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**ABOVE:** The Arboretum display garden, "Entry to Cascadia," for the 2009 Northwest Flower and Garden Show. (Photograph by Jacob Smithers)



## Dozens of Nurseries & Vendors!



species, when planted in the Cascadia Forest, will soar in time a hundred feet or more in the air and create an understory for smaller plants. The conifers in the Siskyou Mountains include several species of true or silver fir (*Abies*) such as white fir (*A. concolor*) and noble fir (*A. procera*). Pines include Jeffrey pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*) and sugar pine (*P. lambertiana*). Among the spruces are Brewer's spruce (*Picea breweriana*) and the Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*).

The middle level of planting in the show garden featured broadleaf evergreens. Tan oak (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*) and California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*) are native to the Siskiyous. We also used Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*), a plant common to Western Washington. Broadleaf evergreens are valuable in any garden design because they offer contrast to conifers and deciduous plants.

In the chaparral section of the show garden, we used two mahonias: long-leaf Oregon grape (*Berberis nervosa*) and creeping mahonia (*B. repens*). Another valuable evergreen native groundcover in the show garden was kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*). The Cascadia Forest will feature many other plants from the genus *Arctostaphylos*, including *A. canescens* and *A. viscida*—all wonderful plants that are hard to find in nurseries.

We also created a low spot in the show garden to represent a small bog—the natural habitat for the cobra lily (*Darlingtonia californica*), an insect-eating plant native to the Siskiyous.

In creating plant combinations for the show garden, we found it helpful to observe the forests around us, where Western sword ferns (*Polystichum munitum*) carpet the ground under the forest canopy and red-flowering currants (*Ribes sanguineum*) hug the woodland edge. We also thought about the dramatic effect of contrasting leaf textures, using the glossy, rounded leaves of salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) against the sharply pointed foliage of

Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*). Another contrast, which is especially effective in winter, places the red-tipped twigs of vine maples (*Acer circinatum*) against dark-green conifers. In summer, the light-green foliage of the vine maple provides contrast to the surrounding conifers.

By using native plants in our gardens we can foster wildlife and connect to the natural world. Study the microclimates in your own garden and choose native plants that will thrive in them. If you are gardening in a spot that still has remnants of the natural forest, learn how to foster the natives and keep out invasive plants. (We all know we are talking about Himalayan blackberry and ivy!) Doing so allows us to garden harmoniously with nature.

Whether you are looking for planting design ideas or want to know more about the natural flora around us, the Cascadia Forest will provide an excellent resource. As Arboretum Foundation Executive Director Paige Miller says, "We are excited to show to the public the wonderful palette of native plants that will be featured in the new Cascadia Forest display at the Arboretum." ~

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For over 10 years, **BOB LILLY** has been chair of Florabundance, the Arboretum's spring plant sale, and co-chair of the Bulb Sale; he also has worked on the Arboretum's display gardens at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show, acting as sole designer for two of them. **PHIL WOOD** is a consultant for the Arboretum's new Cascadia Forest, was co-designer of the Arboretum's 2009 Flower and Garden Show display garden, and is a member of the "Bulletin" editorial board.

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# Carpinus fangiana

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS

BY DANIEL J. HINKLEY

The genus *Carpinus* remains a seminal taxon in my understanding and appreciation of the world of trees. In the deciduous woodlands of northern Michigan, my father taught me to distinguish musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*), the only New World representative of the genus, from the equally prominent and closely related hop hornbeam *Ostrya virginiana*. Little did I realize, at the time, that the trajectory of my life later would intersect with many of the 35-odd species of *Carpinus* found in Japan, Korea, Turkey, Nepal, Taiwan and Mainland China.

The genus name is the original Latin moniker applied to the two European species, *Carpinus betulus* and *Carpinus orientalis*. The universal common name of hornbeam refers to the hardness of its wood, although the vernacular name of musclewood, through which I first made its acquaintance, refers to the ripped musculature of its framework. For many years the genus was included in the family of birches, Betulaceae, but current taxonomic research suggests it belongs with the Corylaceae family, which also includes the hazelnuts (genus *Corylus*) and the hop hornbeams (genus *Ostrya*).

The leaves of all *Carpinus* alternate on the twig, generally are ovate and linear in shape, and display prominently serrated or dentated surfaces. (The alternate leaf arrangement of *Carpinus* makes it easy to distinguish this genus from a maple species, *Acer carpinifolium*,

*folium*, whose oppositely arranged foliage is otherwise duplicitously similar in appearance to that of *Carpinus*.) The flowers of all species of *Carpinus* are monoecious, with male and female flowers appearing along separate, pendulous catkins in spring. Although the male catkins are jettisoned after they deliver pollen, the numerous female flowers on each catkin expand to express jagged, papery bracts that attend small nutlets.

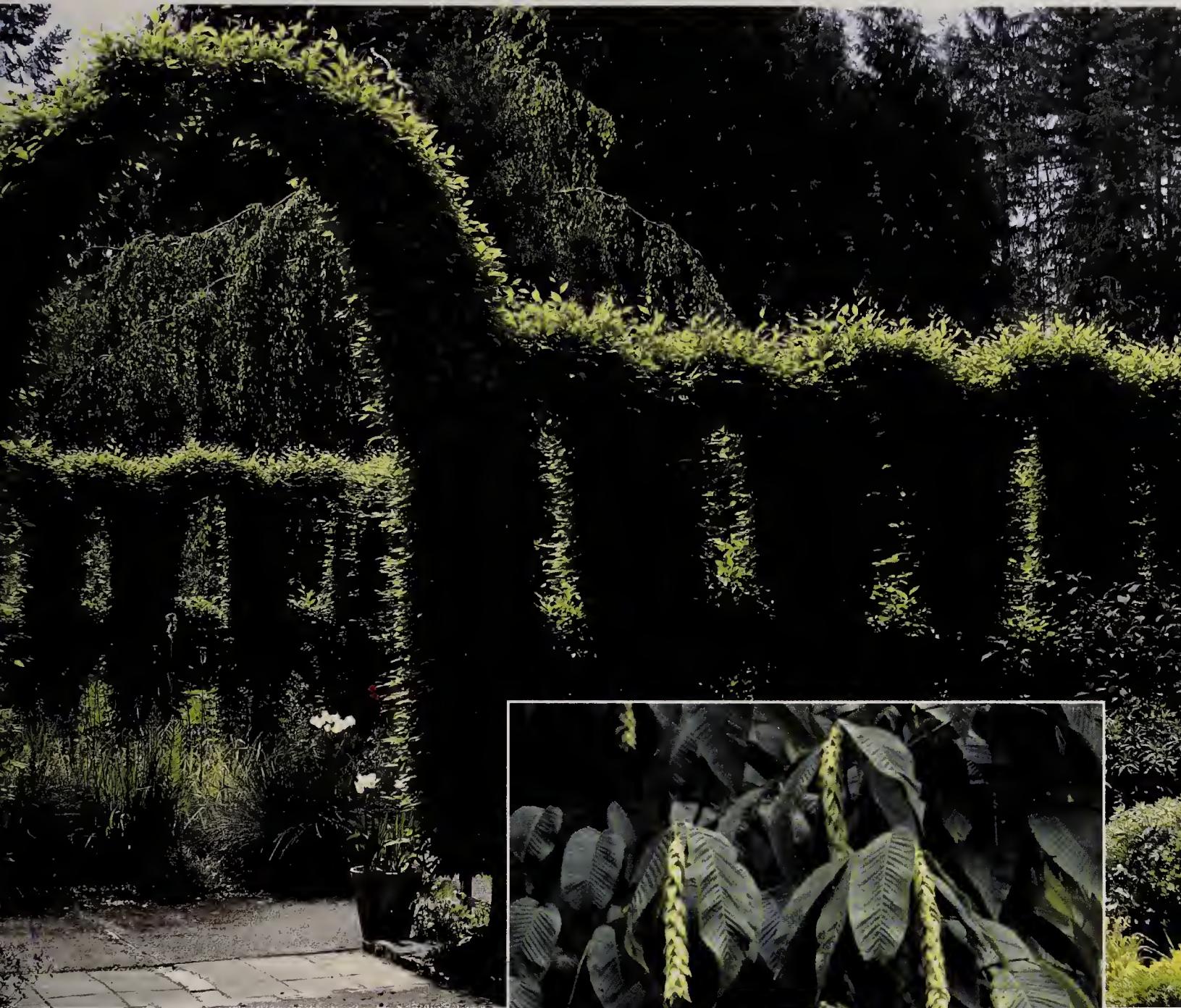
The genus represents a large contingent of small and elegant deciduous trees that are hardy for gardens in the Pacific Northwest—except for the exceedingly lovely but tender *Carpinus viminalis* that hails from low elevations of the eastern Himalayas. *Carpinus japonica*, a specimen of which grows on the north side of the Arboretum's lagoon is, in my opinion, one of the most poised, yet sadly overlooked, small trees for West Sound landscapes. I would venture a guess that the highly sculpted, fanciful (and enormously time-consuming) vaulting hedge of *Carpinus betulus* 'Fastigiata' in my former garden in Kingston will remain a cynosure for those who visited it before the garden closed in 2006.

If there is a given in the world of plants, it is that within the ranks of each genus there lurks an unknown that can rewrite perceptions of the genus at large. So it is with *Carpinus*—and with my introduction to *Carpinus fangiana*.

Professor Fang Wenpei (1899-1983) is considered one of the most esteemed and

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**OPPOSITE: UPPER:** A hedge of *Carpinus betulus* 'Fastigiata' at the author's former nursery, Heronswood.  
**LOWER LEFT:** A rare *Carpinus betulus* 'Columnaris Nanus' in a private arboretum in Belgium.  
**LOWER RIGHT:** *Carpinus fangiana*.





influential botanists of post-revolutionary China. Working as a botanist in the Department of Botany at Sichuan University, he made his life's work the study of the rich biodiversity of flora in the mountains of western Sichuan. Roy Lancaster, an eminent plantsman from the United Kingdom, met with Fang during Lancaster's first trip to Sichuan in 1971; in his classic "Travels in China," Lancaster expresses his profound appreciation for meeting this botanical titan before his death. As an aside, I met with Fang's son, who carried on his father's botanical legacy, during my first trip to Sichuan in 1996.

Yet it was in the collection of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden

(UBCBG), through my association with the sadly deceased plantsmen Gerald Straley and Peter Wharton, that I came to know *Carpinus fangiana*—the tree whose name honors the work of Professor Fang. To say I was awestruck by its physical attributes would be akin to saying Audrey Hepburn was simply a pretty woman and not an extraordinarily talented actress with a fully grounded personality. I was besotted.

The foliage of *Carpinus fangiana* is lengthy. I mean really lengthy—to the dimensions of eight inches by two inches on a cleverly cultivated specimen. The pendulous catkins of female flowers—with the squat bracts mentioned above—extend to an astounding length of 10 inches or more. As they remain intact from late summer until early winter, this striking effect is far from ephemeral.

Unfortunately, it seems it takes more than one *Carpinus* to tangle. Although the clone from UBCBG flowered and "fruited" consistently, the resulting nutlets were as empty as an interview with Britney Spears. During a trip I sponsored in 1997, Eric Hammond, my head propagator at my former enterprise (Heronswood Nursery), collected a single seedling of this species from western Sichuan. Being quite variable in appearance, Eric's collection specimen did not possess the pulchritude of the UBCBG clone; nonetheless it did proffer itself as a possible suitor for the UBCBG tree. Unfortunately, this proposed marriage was not consummated before Heronswood was shuttered in 2006.

During the autumn of 2008 I visited Sichuan Province again, this time on behalf of the University of Washington Botanic

**ABOVE:** A *Carpinus fangiana* photographed in western Sichuan Province in fall 2008.

Gardens, and as a consultant for Monrovia Growers Inc. My perennial collecting companions, Scott McMahan and Ozzie Johnson of Georgia, also were part of the team. We collected plant material in a mountainous area approximately 200 miles southeast of Chengdu, Sichuan, where *Davidia*, *Idesia*, *Tetracentron*, *Acer* and *Cercidiphyllum* predominated in the landscape. At the end of a long and exceedingly disappointing trek (due to the profound paucity of seed proffered during this particular autumn), we came upon a sole, fruited specimen of *Carpinus fangiana* overhanging a dry river bed. The remaining infructescences that still adhered to the branches were a staggering one foot in length, although most had, disappointingly, fully jettisoned their seed. For the next three hours we moved individual rocks and pebbles in an area beneath the mother plant to gather the nutlets scattered by this specimen.

Under the name *Carpinus fangiana* DJH 8066, these collected nutlets are now with the propagation staff at the Center for Urban Horticulture and, hopefully, a small grove of *Carpinus fangiana* will be planted in the Chinese forest area of the Arboretum's Pacific Connections Garden in the near future. With several clones planted together, viable seed should be produced, and this splendid, small tree ultimately will become more widely available for use in gardens throughout North America. ~

**DAN HINKLEY**, who acts as horticultural consultant to Monrovia Growers and numerous design firms in the Pacific Northwest, serves on the boards of the Arboretum Foundation and the Miller Botanical Garden. His third book, "The Explorer's Garden—Shrubs and Vines from Four Corners of the World," will be released by Timber Press in May 2009.



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# A New Management Plan for the Union Bay Natural Area

BY KERN EWING

The Union Bay Natural Area (UBNA), that part of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) north of the Ship Canal, has come a long way since the 1970s when it was known as the Montlake dump. Primarily through the work of University of Washington students, restoration projects have been initiated in many areas of the UBNA, and—through the work of UWBG maintenance staff—blackberries have been kept from reclaiming the site.

The first UBNA management plan was written for the site in 1994, when Dr. Clem Hamilton was the director of the Center for Urban Horticulture; almost no restoration had been done in UBNA at the time of its publication, but quite a bit has been done since. Now the area has become one of the premier restoration areas in the western United States

for research into, and implementation of, restoration techniques. Over a thousand students have worked here and learned about the philosophy, science and practice of ecological restoration. Almost every year, faculty members run into graduates of the program who share that they have gone back to see how “their” project was coming along. UBNA has been a crucible that has helped form an environmental consciousness for many young people.

By last year, it became clear that our guiding policies need to be updated from the 1994 plan. For one thing, students, staff, volunteers and faculty have been doing restoration both at UBNA and UWBG for almost two decades now, and consequently we are able to see things through the filter of experience. In addition, it has always been recognized that the UBNA landform is dynamic. The landfill was placed



**LEFT AND THIS PAGE:** Scenes of flora and fauna in the Union Bay Natural Area.  
(Photographs by Alan Bollen)



SUB-AREA	SIZE (ACRES)	% WETLAND	% CANOPY COVER	OTHER WATER FEATURES
E-5 restoration	4.7	13	18	University Slough
Loop Trail	25.5	15	10	Lake Washington, Shovelers, Central Ponds
Northwest	13.9	12	22	University Slough
Wahkiakum Prairie	3.8	9	9	
East Basin	6.3	52	67	Lake Washington
Unmanaged Wildlife Area	6.7	96	74	Lake Washington
Conibear	1.3	100	51	Lake Washington
Dempsey	3.8	21	58	Lake Washington
North University Slough	2.1	100	100	

on top of peat and soft clay, and the weight of the fill and the covering material has pressed down and created unequal settlement. When the Montlake landfill was closed, and the surface smoothed over, three initial wetlands started to form on the site; a recent inventory now identifies the existence of twenty-seven. Some areas have subsided by over 15 feet; Lake Washington has moved in to join with at least two of the inland wetlands and will undoubtedly flow into others in the coming decades. In light of these changes, revision of the management plan was needed to inventory current conditions, to articulate new policies that need to be put in place to manage UBNA, and to identify areas of need and future change.

For the purposes of the 1994 management plan update, UBNA was divided into management units, and the area of each was measured. (UWBG management responsibilities include both UBNA and the adjacent University shoreline.) Together, all these units have a total area of about 74 acres. On the map on page 15, the letters and corresponding management units are: A (University Slough from Clark Road to NE 45th Street), B (Northwest), C (Wahkiakum Prairie), D (Parking lot E-5 restoration), E (Loop Trail), F (Unmanaged Wildlife Area), G (East Basin), H (Conibear Shellhouse restoration), and I (Dempsey Indoor Practice Facility restoration).

In addition to establishing and naming these areas, the following important landscape

characteristics of the sub-areas were inventoried: the percentage of each unit that is wetland, the percentage of canopy cover, and the proximity to water features. These characteristics are shown in the table above.

The size of the wetlands in each area influences the kind of management that must be done and indirectly lets us know how much blackberry maintenance is required, as blackberries do not grow in wetlands. The percentage of canopy cover is important to know because much of the character of UBNA is imparted by the open nature of the site; if we are to do restoration in these open areas, we want to place an upper limit on the amount of tree canopy cover that we install. Water features are important because where there is structural variation (such as grasslands adjoining woodlands or terrestrial systems located next to aquatic ones) the habitat quality of a landscape is usually high.

What has been done in UBNA since active management was initiated in 1990? Classes and faculty have initiated invasive plant control measures and restoration and research projects on approximately 14 acres of land, with the majority of the work being done by students. In 1995, the uncontrolled system of social trails was replaced with a graveled loop trail, and in 1998, the annual mowing of blackberries commenced. (Blackberry shrubs covered half of UBNA at that time; now mowing controls their



Base map accessed from Google Earth in December 2008.

advance, while also giving us the opportunity to install future projects to shade them out, or to establish competitive plants that will take their place.) In 2000, we started restoration and research use of the East Basin. In addition, we began using restored areas to teach academic classes and to do outreach; current academic offerings in restoration and landscape management number more than 10 courses in which students have access to and use UBNA.

The update of the 1994 management plan is called the “Union Bay Natural Area and Shoreline Management Guidelines, 2008.” Completed under the direction of UWBG Executive Director Sandra Lier, it does not replace the 1994 plan but builds upon it, recognizing that UWBG has the responsibility to manage UBNA in the following areas: long-term stewardship of the site, invasive species management, teaching, research, outreach and ongoing restoration. It also recognizes that UBNA has an important role within the context of the UWBG. Botanic gardens initially may have been established to showcase exotic plant species, but now plant conservation has become one of their major missions. Restoration is an extension of conservation; it is what you do to protect the environment when there are fewer and fewer surviving natural systems to

conserve. Restoration also allows members of the community to have a positive and mutually beneficial interaction with the environment. There is a natural connection at UWBG between the ecosystem-based collections at the Washington Park Arboretum and the study and practice of ecosystem restoration that takes place in the UNBA. They are two parts of a whole: The Arboretum displays what intact systems look like, and experiments in the UNBA develop methods that allow the reconstruction of damaged systems.

What are the greatest needs identified in the 2008 management plan? First, we must continue to perform restoration on the lands of UBNA. Students are willing, but we have outraced the maintenance staff's ability to maintain restored sites. Using staffing rates for the most minimal level of maintenance outlined in the Arboretum Master Plan, the UBNA—which currently receives the attention of one gardener at quarter time—should be maintained by a staff of 3.5 gardeners.

Second, our greatest contact with people—and therefore our greatest opportunity for teaching, outreach and making friends for UWBG—occurs along the trails in UBNA. The trails go along the shore of Lake Washington and through the managed and restored areas. By expanding the trail system, we can increase the value of the site. A new loop trail should be established in the Northwest sub-area. We have long tried to find funding to establish a boardwalk to provide access to the wooded swamp in the East Basin. We also would like to connect the proposed new gardens behind the Center for Urban Horticulture to UBNA with a short trail and boardwalk.

Third, we would like to continue converting parking lot E-5 into a South Puget Sound prairie demonstration restoration. Finally, structural improvements could create many desirable features in UBNA. These might include bird photography blinds, kayak pullouts, wildlife structures and feeding stations, trail drains, and

*continues on page 33*

# *Careless Grace— The Gardens of Lord & Schryver*

BY RUTH ROBERTS, GRETCHEN CARNABY

AND BOBBIE DOPP

According to the eminent Oregon architect and author Wallace Kay Huntington, it was ". . . a milestone in the history of Northwest garden design" when Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver established their landscape architecture firm in Salem, Oregon in 1929.<sup>1</sup> What is it about the lives and work of Lord and Schryver that elicits such an accolade? Is it the number



of gardens they designed, the composition of their plant palette, or their design principles? Is it their gender, or the era and place in which they practiced? Is it the breadth of their professional activities?

In the following article, we hope to explain why the role Lord and Schryver played in developing a unique style of Pacific Northwest landscape architecture



1. Vaughan, Thomas, editor and Virginia Guest Ferriday, associate editor, "Space, Style and Structure: Building in Northwest America," (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, Volume 2, 1974)



**OPPOSITE ABOVE:** Integration between the residence and its garden spaces is a hallmark of Lord & Schryver designs. Garden "rooms" are sited to provide beautiful views from indoor vantage points.

**OPPOSITE BELOW:** Low boxwood hedges provide a vertical point of transition between a panel of grass and a brick path. **ABOVE:** A "side room" between front and back gardens uses evergreens to establish year-round interest. (All images in article courtesy of Lord & Schryver Conservancy)



**ABOVE:** Hedges and a lawn provide structure for an exuberant planting of broadleaf evergreen flowering shrubs and lilacs.



Edith Schryver (l) and Elizabeth Lord (r) established the first woman-owned landscape architecture firm in the Pacific Northwest in Salem, Oregon in 1929.

earns them a place among the “greats” of their field.

## Beginnings

Edith Schryver was born in 1901 in Kingston, New York. Although her family had no known associations with gardening or design, Schryver seems to have settled early on landscape architecture as a career. Some biographers have speculated that the deaths of several high school classmates in World War I, as well as the death of her mother during the flu epidemic of 1918, made Schryver determined to achieve financial independence and professional security as soon as possible. So it was upon graduating from high school that she attended the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture in Groton, Massachusetts.

Founded by Judith Low in 1901, Lowthorpe was one of the few schools at the time that educated women as professional landscape architects. It offered a three-year course of study that included training in history, fine arts, horticulture, architectural design and construction. (During its 44 years of existence, Lowthorpe trained over 400 women as landscape architects.) The school emphasized a “domestic” practice that integrated architecture and landscape architecture to create a total environment—a revolutionary approach at the time.

Upon leaving Lowthorpe in 1922, Schryver joined the firm of the New York landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman and worked there for five years. As one of the most capable young talents in the office, Schryver was involved in the design and construction of several major estate gardens. She described herself and others in the office as “free-swinging career girls,” but she must have been an apt and attentive student of Shipman’s garden style. It is said that “domesticity, intimacy and romantic, sensual seclusion” characterize the best of Shipman’s designs, and these same qualities were to appear in future Lord & Schryver designs.

Elizabeth Lord was born in 1887 in Salem, Oregon to a prominent Pacific Northwest family. Her father, William Paine Lord, would become an Oregon governor and ambassador to Argentina. Lord’s mother, Juliet Montague Lord, was a social activist and avid gardener who traveled extensively, often accompanied by her daughter. The thirty-eight-year-old Lord enrolled at Lowthorpe in 1926, after her parents had died and an earlier attempt to become a nurse had been thwarted by a progressive hearing loss.

Lord and Schryver attended Lowthorpe at different times and did not meet until 1927, when they both joined a study tour of European gardens partially sponsored by the school. During the next four months, they visited and photographed gardens in England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, drawing plans of

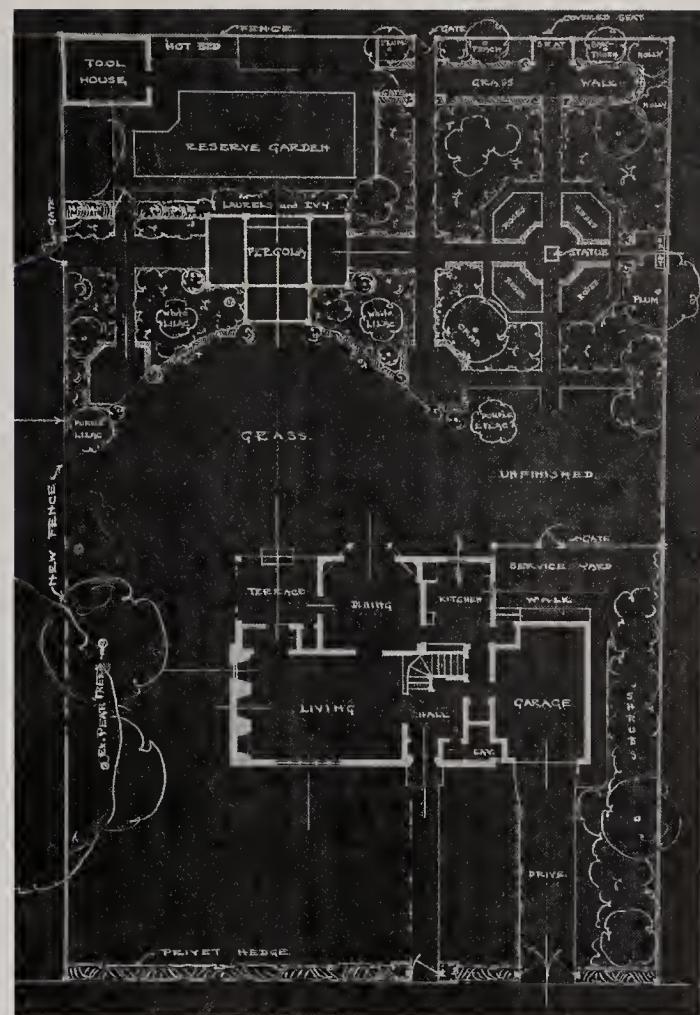
their designs on measured graphs. It was clear that they shared similar tastes and aesthetic responses, and that they were optimistic of success when Lord suggested that Schryver move west and join her in forming a landscape architecture firm. Their interests and skills were complementary (Schryver's specialty was design and construction, and Lord's was plant composition), and the lantern slides from their European travels would serve as a foundation for their lectures to garden clubs—the primary way they planned to build their practice.

## A Practice Is Established

When Schryver joined Lord in Salem to form the first firm of women landscape architects in the Pacific Northwest, conditions were auspicious for their success. The region west of the Cascade Mountains was just becoming nationally known among gardeners for its soils, humid atmosphere and temperate climate—conditions that made it possible to grow the wide variety of plants that already had made the English gardens of the day famous. An increased regional interest in design for home grounds was evolving, supported by a developing nursery industry. The economy was strong, and gardening was becoming a popular leisure activity.

During the next 40 years, the Lord & Schryver firm was to bring to the public and private gardens of the Pacific Northwest a style of garden influenced by Gertrude Jekyll and Shipman. Their firm would modify a formal, symmetrical design style—that practitioners such as Jekyll had developed for English and continental estate gardens, and Shipman, among others, had adapted for country houses on the East Coast—to the special characteristics of the Pacific Northwest. Add to these influences Lowthorpe's emphasis on integrating house and garden, and the fundamentals of Lord & Schryver's approach to designing gardens were established.

Although the partners were based in Salem during their careers, they worked on projects



A typical residential garden plan shows the strong structural elements underlying Lord & Schryver designs.

throughout the Pacific Northwest. Most of their designs were done for clients in Seattle, Tacoma, Portland and Salem, but they also worked in Walla Walla, Pendleton and Klamath Falls. Because most of their designs were for a clientele that valued its privacy, Lord & Schryver's work is not as well known to today's public as is the work of other notable garden designers.

The First Year

With Schryver's arrival in Salem, they set to work immediately. Through her family, Lord knew many prominent people in the Pacific Northwest. The partners drew up a client list and printed a fee card. Their first year of practice proved to be very busy, working on projects such as the R.D. Merrill garden on Seattle's Capitol Hill, the Scott Bullitt garden in Seattle's Highlands, and the grounds of a Spanish-style mansion in Salem.

During that same first year, they began designing a series of garden rooms for Deepwood, an estate in Salem with a fine Victorian house and extensive grounds. Due to pre-existing site conditions, Deepwood is not a good example of their skills at integrating house and garden, but the garden is illustrative of many of their design principles. Now called Historic Deepwood Estate, it is part of the City of Salem parks system and is open to the public. (See [www.historicdeepwoodestate.org](http://www.historicdeepwoodestate.org))

As their practice grew, Lord & Schryver encountered problems procuring the kinds of East Coast plants they were familiar with and liked to use in their designs—plants that regional nurseries did not currently grow. Because transportation costs from Eastern suppliers were prohibitively expensive, they began to cultivate local sources to grow the plants. Thus Lord & Schryver are responsible for the introduction to the Pacific Northwest of many new species still used in our gardens today. A visit to the 1939 New York World's

Fair, for example, led them to order floribunda roses they had seen at the Jackson and Perkins display because "They are not being used here and we feel that they will work very well in the Northwest." Additionally, they would often test new introductions in their own garden. In 1929 they ordered English, Dutch and Spanish iris from a Puyallup grower to study color combinations and show them to the "many clients that visit our garden."

### **Later Accomplishments**

Despite an initial burst of work, the rate of commissions slowed during the years of the Great Depression and World War II, when the partners found that competent gardeners able to build and maintain their commissions were in short supply. But clients still continued to seek out the level of quality for which Lord & Schryver was noted. Many of their designs during these years were made for modest city lots, but they gave them the same detailed attention and instinctive sense of taste they

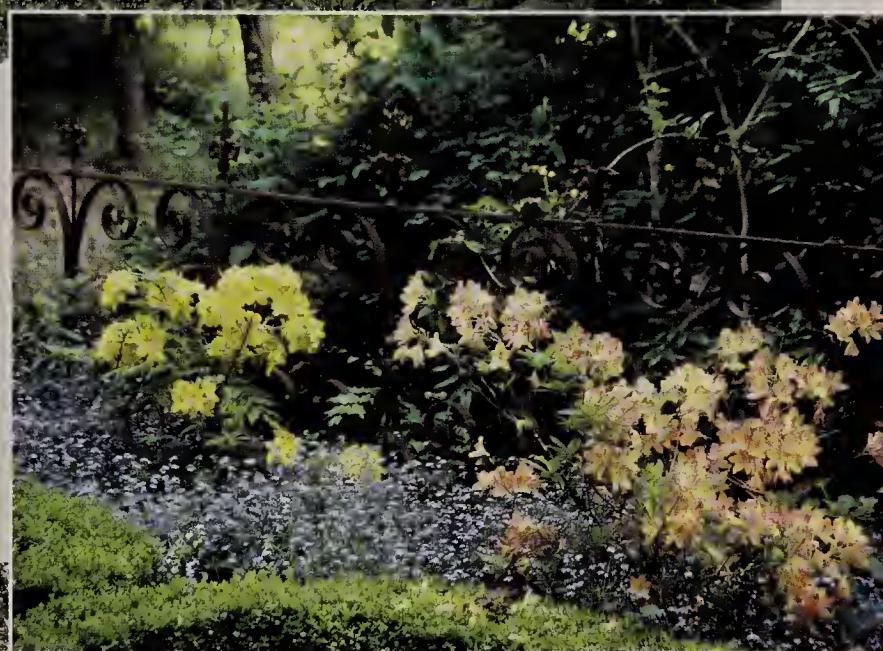
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**BELOW:** Edith Schryver's skill in combining garden structures with complex planting schemes makes Lord & Schryver designs unique.





**ABOVE:** According to architect/author Wallace Kay Huntington, the home garden of Lord and Schryver "...may at first glance seem deceptively simple, but upon closer examination [it becomes apparent that it is] a tour de force of garden design." **MIDDLE:** Cream, clear yellow, orange and rust blooms play off the boxwood hedge and wrought iron fence in the Scroll Garden at Historic Deepwood Estate in Salem. **BETWEEN:** Wisteria standards anchor parterres defined by boxwood hedges.



had used earlier for more ambitious projects. In the 1950s, the practice picked up again; in this period, they designed expansive gardens for a number of colonial houses in the Dunthorpe area of Portland, many of which remain essentially intact today. Even Lord & Schryver gardens that have been modified through the years to complement contemporary architecture and building materials often retain the firm's characteristic style.

Over the years, Schryver continued to focus on domestic designs, while Lord's interest moved toward public work. Lord, who served on Salem's Parks Board and the Capitol Planning Commission for more than a decade, is responsible for design work in many of Salem's parks, and in the landscapes of its schools and public buildings. Her mother believed that Salem could be one of the most beautiful cities in the nation, and Lord spent a lifetime furthering that aim. Schryver taught advanced landscape design at Oregon State College during the war years and joined Lord in some of her civic work. Together they lectured and wrote articles for publication in local and regional newspapers. They also participated in a Corvallis-based radio broadcast called "The Home Garden Hour."

In 1932, the partners had a house built to their specifications. Located in the heart of Salem, it was both a home and a place from which to conduct the firm's business. Lord and Schryver chose Clarence Smith, the most accomplished architect practicing in Salem, who was designing many of the houses they were landscaping. A completely integrated house and garden, the property shows their skill at both its most refined and most personal. Wallace Huntington describes their home garden in the following passage: "So subtle are the foliage colors and textures and so skillfully arranged is the succession of blooms that, like an impressionist painting, it may at first seem deceptively simple but upon closer examination the incredible command and knowledge of their media—plants instead of paint—is truly

stunning. Here the geometry of the compartmented scheme is at its most effective and the quality of design in arbors and fences at its classic finest. Anyone who conceives of a formal garden as being static has only to study the calculated interplay of spatial relationships in this tour de force of garden design."

## Design Principles

In "Pioneers of American Landscape Design," which contains the biographies of significant landscape architects, the only firm listed for Oregon is that of Lord & Schryver. What makes their landscape designs so special? Why has their work held up to the test of time? The answers to these questions lie in the expertise and sensitivity with which they applied their design principles and their knowledge of plant material.

Their design principles are based on the following "main points to consider in designing an attractive garden," taken from an article by Lord and Schryver that was published in the Portland newspaper, "The Oregonian," on March 6, 1932:

- 1. Proper placing of house on lot**
- 2. Division into areas, such as entrance, walks and drives, service areas and pleasure gardens**
- 3. Relation and circulation between these areas, so that you can go easily from one to another**
- 4. Axis, or view line**
- 5. Enclosure, such as fences and hedges**
- 6. Interest, meaning seats, birdbaths, pools, etc.**
- 7. Planting the proper plant in the proper place**

In an ideal garden design project, Lord & Schryver would work with the architect to site the house so that it had the desired orientation to a specific garden view, light patterns, interesting or challenging topography, and weather conditions, such as prevailing winds. In addition, the orientation of the house had to provide the maximum potential for the interrelationship between house and garden.

The garden in our moderate Pacific Northwest climate was to function as an extension of the house by providing additional casual outdoor living space—including an entrance garden, service areas, pleasure gardens, cutting gardens and other features. This focus on function meant the full potential of the home property could be realized.

In creating their gardens, Lord & Schryver used the design qualities of *interest* and *intimacy* to produce “charm,” which they felt was the most important attribute for a garden to possess. To create *interest*, transitional elements—such as paths with intricately designed arbors, arches, gates or pergolas—were used to, in the words of the article, “lure the curious on.” Such paths are part of a highly developed circulation system connecting all parts of the garden. Site lines (axes) from house doorways and windows, and within garden rooms, provided an artistic grounding

for the garden; choice plant material, a view, a pergola or garden house, a gate in a wall or hedge, or stairways terminated each major axis. Garden furnishings—including seats, sculptures, birdbaths and sundials—were generally located at the foci of secondary axes. The resulting axial system so typical of their designs helped organize the garden in such a way as to add immensely to the pleasure one feels in their gardens. To create *intimacy*, the gardens were divided into “rooms” enclosed by fences, hedges or broad-leaved evergreen shrubberies. Such enclosure creates privacy and, therefore, provides a sense of comfort for work or pleasure activities. Each garden area had a specific function; for example, small garden rooms adjacent to the house provided intimate views from the house into the garden.

Both Lord and Schryver possessed an extensive love and knowledge of plants. They used the plant material already familiar to



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## THE LORD & SCHRYVER CONSERVANCY

**D**uring the 1980s, a growing awareness of the treasure embodied in Lord and Schryver's legacy gathered momentum, spurred by concerns about the conservation of their remaining gardens. The Conservancy was formed in November 2005 with the mission "to preserve and interpret the legacy of Lord and Schryver and thereby promote a greater understanding of their contribution to Northwest landscape architecture." The Conservancy is affiliated with the Garden Conservancy and partners with the Oregon Cultural Trust.

The Conservancy sponsors a wide variety of projects, among them archiving Lord & Schryver's professional materials: collecting oral histories by friends and associates, identifying "lost" gardens, documenting surviving gardens, and cataloguing and digitizing 1500 historic and contemporary images of Lord and Schryver and their gardens.

In addition, the Conservancy has undertaken a major rehabilitation of Historic Deepwood Estate, the only one of Lord & Schryver's residential designs currently open to the public. Based on extensive research and analysis by Conservancy members, plans to rehabilitate the deteriorated gardens were developed in collaboration with the City of Salem, implemented by volunteers, and supported by \$10,000 in grants; the rehabilitation is scheduled to be completed late in 2009 as a gift to Oregon's sesquicentennial celebration.

Education is an important part of the Lord & Schryver legacy: the Conservancy offers hands-on workshops on the Lord & Schryver style, gives oral presentations on their legacy, and leads garden tours at Deepwood. The organization's research has led to plans for a series of monographs, the first of which has been published and is entitled "Essentials of Landscape Architecture." It contains nine articles that the partners wrote for "The Oregonian" in 1932 on how their design principles can be applied to an urban lot.

Other activities involve three public lectures to begin in fall of 2009 that will discuss Lord & Schryver's contributions to, and the role of women in, the evolving field of Pacific Northwest landscape architecture; the development of an interpretive center in the restored carriage house at Deepwood; and the ongoing efforts to preserve and eventually rehabilitate Lord and Schryver's home garden.

For more information on Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver and the activities of the Lord & Schryver Conservancy, see [www.lord-schryverconservancy.org](http://www.lord-schryverconservancy.org).

them from East Coast gardens and combined it with our native Pacific Northwest plant palette to create lush, complex plant combinations based heavily on broad-leaved evergreens. (Many of the latter grow well in the acid soils and moderate climate of the Pacific Northwest.) In addition, each plant in a design plan was selected for the form, texture and color it would bring to a specific composition within the garden.

Lord & Schryver always attempted to preserve as much extant plant material on a garden site as possible; the presence of large shrubs and trees contributed a look of maturity they felt was highly desirable. Taller conifers were restricted to the boundaries of the garden, while deciduous flowering trees, generally sub-canopy specimens, were preserved if they lay closer to the house.

A year-round succession of bloom is characteristic of their work. This succession might begin with the winter-blooming *Camellia sasanqua*, the Japanese camellias of late winter, followed by spring-flowering plums, cherries and magnolias, crabapples and hawthorns, and ending with lilacs, hydrangeas and the scented blooms of *Osmanthus fragrans*. For additional fall and winter interest, they used such shrubs as *Vitex*, viburnums and wintersweet.

As mentioned above, broad-leaved evergreens are critical to the success of Lord & Schryver designs because they give textural interest throughout the year. The shrubberies located at the extremity of a garden might be composed of mixtures of tall varieties of rhododendrons, camellias and laurels. Small, enclosed gardens, hedged with evergreens, frequently were sited adjacent to a living or dining room window, or functioned as passageways from the front garden to the back garden. These little "picture" gardens typically were bisected by a charming path and featured evergreen azaleas backed up with rhododendrons, Mexican orange or *Pieris* and underplanted with hellebores. A focal point such as a birdbath, small pool or deciduous,

flowering tree completed the scene. Other choice selections used by Lord & Schryver included boxwood, their signature white-berried skimmia, and the old-fashioned male skimmia, which grows much larger than modern selections.

Where fences or shrubberies weren't used, evergreen hedges created the quality of privacy so necessary to a successfully designed Lord & Schryver garden. They frequently used laurel and holly at the boundaries of a garden, and lined paths and enclosed garden spaces with boxwood. It is thought Lord & Schryver introduced boxwood hedges to the Pacific Northwest. As the partners said in an article written for "The Oregonian" on April 3, 1932, "[Boxwood] gives immediate age, charm, and dignity where it is properly used in our gardens, but care must be taken in its placing. . . Boxwood is a heritage handed down to us from the old English and colonial gardens, a heritage which we must preserve and continue."

Lord & Schryver designed three basic types of flower gardens: the single perennial border in front of a fence or hedge at the edge of a lawn, the double perennial border bisected by a path set in a narrow panel of lawn, and the enclosed flower garden usually defined by an axial system of paths. (This last type created the most intimate association between a viewer and the flowers.) The enclosed flower garden encompasses a very complex system of spring bulbs underplanted with forget-me-nots, violas, primroses and small edging plants, followed by the iris, peonies and columbines of May. Biennials such as foxgloves and Canterbury bells, and June perennials—such as delphiniums and veronicas—are next on the scene. As bulbs and biennials fade, annuals that accompany late-blooming perennials such as phlox, hollyhock and eventually asters and chrysanthemums, replace them. Individual varieties were planted in drifts so as to "avoid a spotty or colorless appearance." A favorite combination for semi-shade at the edge of an enclosed garden included columbines, lilies

and fall anemones. These labor-intensive gardens are found in their landscape designs prior to World War II, when labor was relatively cheap. Few detailed drawings of specific flower gardens exist, since many of Lord & Schryver's clients were members of garden clubs and had the interest and knowledge to design their own.

Additional favorite plant combinations included intricate, complementary combinations of spring bulbs at the bases of flowering trees, lilacs underplanted with *Deutzia* (frequently east-facing), lilacs underplanted with peonies (west-facing), lilac allées underplanted with hydrangeas, carpets of old-fashioned hellebores under deciduous magnolias (the latter are notoriously shallow-rooted—hence self-seeding is an ideal solution), and *Pieris*, *Viburnum davidii* and camellias as part of the foundation plantings.

The lawn was another important element in a Lord & Schryver design because of its year-round presence. Unbroken panels of grass complemented boxwood hedges and tied together separate groups of plants, while panels of grass often functioned in small gardens as organizational elements for the entire space.

Lord & Schryver continually strived for what they termed “informal formality” in their designs. Edith Schryver frequently said, “Order is beauty and beauty is order.” Usually she would quickly add, “But too much neatness without careless grace will not produce charm.” This goal of creating “charm”—a quality that surely had to do with their seemingly innate sense of scale and consistent attention to detail—resulted in garden spaces within which one feels deliciously comfortable and totally at ease.

## Conclusion

If one were to distill the essence of the Lord & Schryver approach to garden design, which elements would endure? Their legacy is a composite of incorporating past influences, working within the realities of their time, and

setting a new standard of garden design and professionalism that is very pertinent for today. As landscape architects, they honored the “sense of place” of each garden while incorporating a complex combination of plant material that resulted in that elusive and signature quality, “charm.” While many of their projects were on a large scale, some of their most important work involved small urban lots; hence its relevance for today.

As professionals, they set a high standard by giving generously to their peers and community. By serving on public boards and commissions, educating students at Oregon State University and the general public through a series of radio programs, writing for the public media, and designing local parks and campuses throughout the Pacific Northwest, they involved an audience well beyond that of their clients. Their legacy still flourishes in domestic gardens and public spaces throughout the Pacific Northwest. ☙

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**RUTH ROBERTS** is a community volunteer with interests in education and the preservation and interpretation of cultural resources. She has been exploring the Lord & Schryver story for over 20 years and serves on the Conservancy Board as an historian. She is a former computer programmer and educator.

**GRETCHEN CARNABY** is a landscape designer and serves on the Conservancy Board as the rehabilitation director for the Lord & Schryver Gardens at Historic Deepwood Estate. She is also the co-founder and project coordinator for the Friends of Bush Gardens, Salem. As a former owner of a Lord & Schryver garden, she has been a student of their legacy for over 20 years. **BOBBIE DOPP** is a retired science teacher whose interest in gardening and history attracted her to the Lord & Schryver story. She is president of the Conservancy Board; teaching knitting and travel are additional pursuits.



# New Plantings at the Japanese Garden

BY JAN K. WHITNER

*"I have found the spirit of gardens to be inexhaustible."*—Tachibana Toshitsuna (C.E. 1028-94)

The new entry complex to the Washington Park Japanese Garden was designed to evoke the appearance of a traditional Japanese village—and two recently planted garden areas in the complex complement and enhance that effect. Designed by Nakano Associates, in consultation with Friends of the Japanese Garden (FJG), the display and courtyard gardens also serve as

points of quiet transition between the outside world and the Japanese Garden. According to FJG President Steve Garber and designer Kenichi Nakano, it was decided early in the design process that the plantings in the new gardens should be “un-showy and non-competitive” with the plantings within the Japanese Garden. Although they are designed with an Asian aesthetic and use plants found in tradi-

**ABOVE:** An *Enkianthus campanulatus* anchors the plantings in the new front courtyard of the Arboretum's Japanese Garden. **INSET:** *Camellia japonica* 'Nuccio's Jewel' adds soft-pink flowers to the spring scene in the Japanese Garden's new display garden. Photo courtesy of Colesville Nursery, Ashland Virginia.

tional Japanese gardens, the new gardens also feature plants usually associated with western gardens; these plants help tie the new garden areas to the surrounding Arboretum landscape.

### The Display Garden

Traditional Japanese architecture is garden-oriented. Jiro Takei and Marc P. Keane, recent translators of the eleventh-century Japanese garden design classic “*Sakuteiki*,” or “Record of Garden Making,” remark that from ancient times “... buildings served in many ways as stages offering advantageous views of the garden.” While traditionally designed rooms have removable screen walls that open to views of the garden outside, the meeting room in the new entry complex features a north-facing wall with glass doors and floor-to-ceiling windows that look into the small but exquisitely designed display garden. The garden, which was generously funded by the Seattle Garden Club, uses choice evergreens to provide a tranquil green landscape all year round, mixed with showstopper flowering shrubs to emphasize seasonal change.

In accordance with traditional Japanese garden design principles, there is a comfortable way to enter the display garden from the meeting room via a landing of granite pavers set before the glass doors, and eaves overhanging the doors allow visitors to step outside to enjoy the garden even during rainy weather. In a nod to the Asian garden design principle of “borrowing views,” the north boundary of the new display garden is visually porous—consisting mostly of short evergreen shrubs that allow viewers in the new garden to see into the Japanese Garden



beyond; on the opposite side of the boundary, viewers within the Japanese Garden can look south into the new display garden from points on the main paths near the entry gate. Because a mix of new plants and older specimens transplanted from nearby spots was used, the display garden

already possesses an aura of maturity and tranquility—qualities highly valued by Japanese gardeners.

The plants in the new display garden are a mix of those found in traditional Japanese gardens, as well as some western hybrids and cultivars that adapt well to the growing conditions found on site. The major display plants include:

*Camellia japonica* (in Japanese, *tsubaki*): An evergreen tree—with shiny, elliptical leaves—that grows up to 40 feet high in favorable conditions. An essential plant in Japanese gardens, where it is used both as a shade tree and, when pruned, as a hedge. Often used in bonsai and in flower arranging. The specimen in the new display garden is a western introduction, *Camellia japonica* ‘Nuccio’s Jewel,’ a medium-sized and slow-growing shrub with soft-washed, pink flowers that bloom in mid-to late season.

*Corylopsis pauciflora* (Buttercup witch hazel; *Hyuga mizuki*): A deciduous shrub three to six feet tall, with ovate leaves and bright yellow spikes in early spring. Native to central Japan, where it is an old garden favorite much appreciated for bringing brilliant color to cloudy spring days; easily pruned, it is often used as a subject for bonsai.

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**ABOVE:** Evergreen *Osmanthus heterophyllus* carries white flowers that suffuse the new front courtyard with their fragrance in fall.

*Kerria japonica* (*yamabuki*): The Japanese name means “mountain wind” and refers to the way flowering branches sway in the wind. Distributed through much of Japan, it is a deciduous shrub that grows three to six feet high with alternate, obovate leaves and a single, golden-yellow flower that blooms in spring.

Acting as borders and underplantings in the display garden are specimens of *Buxus sempervirens* ‘Suffruticosa’ (true dwarf boxwood) and *Rhododendron* ‘Gumpo White,’ a spreading azalea usually two feet high by three feet wide with small leaves and a ruffly three-inch wide white flower. *Epimedium grandiflorum* (Bishop’s hat), *Sagina subulata* (Irish moss) and *Ophiopogon japonicus* ‘Nanus’ (Dwarf mondo grass) compose a serene garden floor with woodland associations.

### The Courtyard Garden

Nakano Associates also designed, in consultation with the Friends of the Japanese Garden, the planted areas edging the new courtyard in front of the entry gate. The plants in this area, selected with the assistance of Kathleen Blanchard, head gardener of the Japanese Garden, serve as an attractive but quiet backdrop to the entry gate and buildings; they also were selected to provide continuing seasonal interest.

A large *Acer palmatum* (Green Japanese maple; *momiji*) buffers the courtyard from Lake Washington Boulevard and provides shade in the summer and colorful foliage in the fall. The following shrubs are planted nearby:

*Osmanthus heterophyllus* (Hollyleaf osmanthus; *hiiragi*): An evergreen tree native to south and central Japan that grows 12 to 16 feet in maturity and displays shiny, elliptical and serrated leaves. Small white flowers bloom in October, when their sweet, haunting fragrance fills Japanese and Chinese temple gardens.

*Ilex crenata* (Japanese holly; *inu tsuge*): An evergreen shrub used extensively in gardens throughout Japan, where it often is pruned

into hedges. Leaves are dark green, ovate to elliptical and glossy, and decorative berries appear in late spring. The courtyard planting will use a western introduction, *I. crenata* ‘Helleri,’ which grows four to five feet in height and spreads five to six feet in width.

*Rhododendron kiusianum* (Kyushu azalea; *Miyama Kirishima*): A densely leaved, evergreen dwarf shrub that grows one to two feet high. Leaves are small and elliptical, and the rose-red flowers glow against the shiny leaves of the *I. crenata* ‘Helleri’ when they bloom in mid-spring. (A row of this stands before the *I. crenata* ‘Helleri’ plantings.)

These specimens of *Osmanthus heterophyllus*, *Ilex crenata* ‘Helleri’ and *Rhododendron kiusianum* are underplanted with carpets of *Hakonechloa macra* (Japanese forest grass; *uraba gusa*) and *Ophiopogon japonicus* ‘Nanus,’ whose graceful foliage provides a contrast to the hard-edged leaves of the evergreen shrubs.

To round out the plantings in the courtyard, a large specimen of *Enkianthus campanulatus* was transplanted from another spot in the Arboretum to the southwest corner of the courtyard. Kenichi Nakano says it will prove a “showstopper” when its blooms explode in spring, and then again in fall when its foliage erupts in brilliant color.

Japanese gardens are designed to express powerful spiritual and aesthetic qualities, and visitors respond accordingly. “I have found the spirit of gardens to be inexhaustible,” says Tachibana Toshitsuna, the author of the “*Sakntseiki*.” The new display and courtyard gardens at the Japanese Garden follow the principles of Japanese garden design by providing a seamless transition between the outer world and the world of the Garden itself—a place where visitors find their own spirits replenished and inspired. ~

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**JAN K. WHITNER** is the editor of the “*Bulletin*.”

## A MANAGER'S FAVORITES:

# Highlights from the Miller Library

BY BRIAN THOMPSON

**"So... what are your favorite books?"**

Steve Lorton, a fellow member of the "Bulletin's" editorial board, recently posed this question to me.

The occasion was a celebration of my promotion to manager of the Elisabeth C. Miller Library. Steve knows I often ask this question of others. But now, he was making me name my favorites, which means whittling down a whole library full of some 15,000 choices to—say—only five.

An alarming prospect (thanks, Steve!), but here is my best go, listed by author:

**■ Donald Culross Peattie**

I love field guides. I collect them as souvenirs wherever I go and have a large, personal collection dedicated to our Pacific Northwest flora.

My favorite among them is probably the one least useful for identifying plants. "A Natural History of Western Trees" (1953) has no photos, no keys, and only modestly useful images of flowers or leaves. But what stories this book tells!

Donald Culross Peattie was a prolific author from the 1920s through 1950s. He wrote books ranging from biography to children's stories, but is best known for his deeply personal writings about nature. Two of his most enduring works—they are never out of print—are volumes on the trees of North America.

Why is Peattie so good? He is both an excellent storyteller and a teacher, and he is



no aloof observer but clearly passionate about all trees, from our mighty conifers to the minor players at the forest's edge. And he allows you to share that passion.

In describing the sub-alpine firs (*Abies lasiocarpa*) flanking Mount Rainier (nicely illustrated in one of many woodcuts by Paul Landacre) he captures your thinking perfectly: "That's a place I would like to camp—in just such a meadow, with just such a view, amid such trees."

**■ Beth Chatto**

Beth Chatto's writing reminds me of my grandfather, the man who taught me the basics of growing plants in a very direct, hands-on way. Chatto is similarly direct and sparse in her words, but she says so much.

Unlike my grandfather, Chatto has developed an extensive garden and nursery over the last 50 years in Essex—the part of England that, like the Pacific Northwest, has very dry summers. In her many books, she succinctly recorded her progress as she and her avid, amateur botanist husband, Andrew, chose plants from native conditions that matched the garden environment.

Chatto kept careful records of her gardening efforts with charts, diagrams and journal notes—and freely shares these in her books. She's not afraid to experiment, and the boldest of these is recounted in "Beth Chatto's Gravel Garden," the story of converting a former parking lot into a garden for plants

that, once established, survive only on the rainfall, which averages 20 inches per year.

"There will be much to learn from this experiment," she notes. "Not all plants will be successful, some may die, others may prove unsuitable, or simply it may be I won't like the effect, or the way one thing smothers out another."

### ■ Louise Beebe Wilder

"Adventures with Hardy Bulbs" is the most inspired of book titles.

No, this is not the writing of an intrepid plant explorer. Instead, Louise Beebe Wilder was an early 20th century gardener, who wrote in her introduction (with an equally intriguing title of "Propaganda") that "... adventure is of the mind—a mental attitude towards everyday events wherever experienced. One does not have to sit through the long night of an Antarctic winter with an Admiral Byrd to know this..."

From there she begins a most unusual A through Z description of bulbous plants (including corms, rhizomes, tubers and the like), all based on her personal experience growing them in her gardens near New York City. There are many other writers of books on bulbs (I know, as this is another personal passion), but very few have the depth of direct experience shared by Wilder—and none have her ability for description.

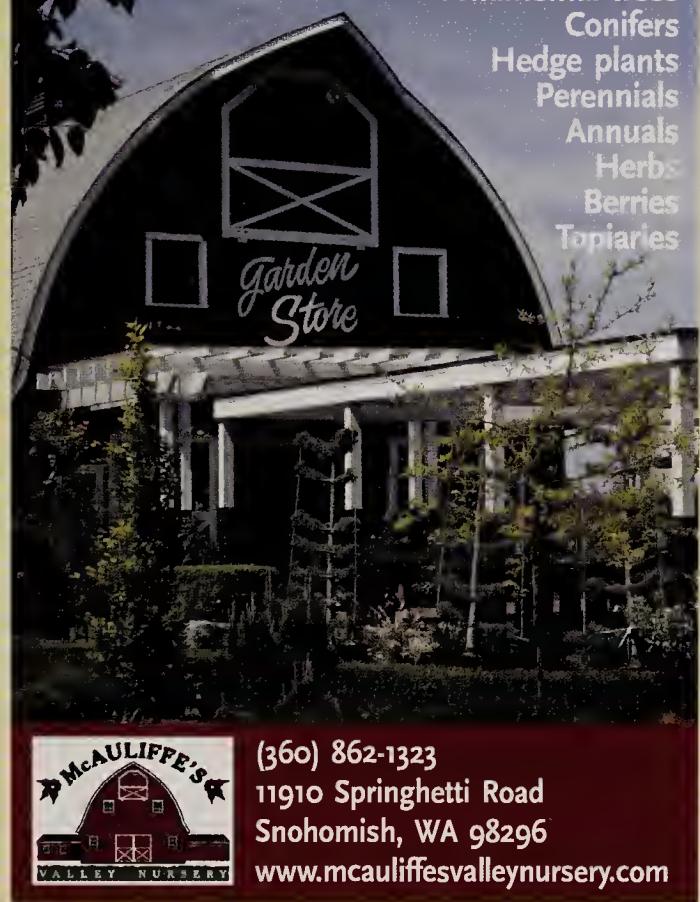
Another way this book differs from others is the short shrift it gives to the more familiar bulbs. There is no long list of tulip or daffodil hybrids, while lilies and dahlias (and most summer bloomers) are left out completely. But she compensates for this by her keen interest in unusual plants, especially those native to western North America.

So here—in this book that is now over 70 years old—is some of the best information about growing many of our native *Camassias*, fritillaries, erythroniums, and even calochortus (although she didn't have much luck with these), in garden conditions. Her style, wit and

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keen skill at observation can all be seen in this passage from the chapter on *Camassia*:

"They are the most delightful companions for May Tulips, with which they bloom, their soft uninsistent hues blending equably with the most flashing or strident or offish of the Tulip tones. When the flowering is past, the foliage dies away with a neat expeditiousness for which we are grateful. There is no long drawn-out and unsightly flopping about in all stages of unlovely decay."

## ■ George Schenk

"The Complete Shade Gardener" by George Schenk was first published in 1984, at a time when there were few regional gardening authors. For no other reason, I acquired it soon after its publication and was captivated by the first chapter. Here, carefully documented in both words and photographs, Schenk describes the planting of a narrow strip of garden, plant-by-plant.

Somehow, in these simple steps that included trial and error, he taught me much about the art of garden design, and I return often to it and subsequent chapters for inspiration.

At the end, he summarizes the process with, "When I had finished, something happened all at once. What is it they say—the whole is greater than the sum of its parts? That, I think, is the working law of the garden, when the garden works. With this tag-end planting of seeming trifles in this triangular postage stamp of ground, the garden instantly gained a soul, began to breathe. A bit of the Sistine spark passed from one to another of the separate plantings and galvanized them into one life."

In a later chapter, Schenk describes the qualities of shade, including: light or thin, dappled or filtered, half (also known as part, medium or semi-), full, dense (also deep or heavy), cold, morning, afternoon, north-wall, high and—finally—lath shade. Quite a list, and I'm not sure if Schenk developed these terms. Nor do they seem to have been widely adopted

by others. No matter. They are an excellent guide to, and raise awareness of, the subtleties of shade and, more importantly, the community of plants that grow in these different conditions.

Schenk has gone on to publish other gardening books, including an enjoyable memoir of gardening around the Pacific Rim and a fascinating study of gardening on tabletops and other hard surfaces. But for me, "Shade Gardener" will remain his classic, with its hands-on lessons of design and plant selection that work, or—perhaps even more instructively—do not.

## ■ Linda Beutler

All of the authors named above began publishing in the 1980s or earlier. I hesitate to name any newer writers, as the test of time is still to be taken. But I'll risk one recent, first book, just because it was so much fun to read and taught me so much.

Linda Beutler puts a lifetime of passion into "Gardening with Clematis: Design & Cultivation," which was published in 2004. While there are more scholarly works on this genus, to which the author pays proper homage, I know of no other book that is as inspiring. And it has the bonus of being by a regional author, so that all the generous advice on cultivation is especially useful.

As the title suggests, "Gardening with Clematis" is not about a single-genus display or test garden but instead describes rich and varied home gardens in which there just happen to be oodles of this one plant, in all its various forms. She makes it sound so simple to plant these vines (and the few non-vines in the genus) throughout the other plantings. "For a gardener with an overactive collecting chromosome, there is no better genus with which to become obsessed."

And in my first steps at following her advice, I think she's right.

She is also extremely practical and understands the ups-and-downs for any gardener.

"Most vines are sold with their standard pruning code listed on the care tag. Be guided by this information, but not burdened by it...start experimenting with the various degrees of pruning."

## ■ Plant Attitude

Towards the end of her book, Beutler is most candid in saying, "You will have noticed that throughout this book I have lapsed occasionally into referring to clematis, and other plants, by using personal pronouns. I do not believe plants are human, but they do seem to be entities with distinct personalities."

She says it so well. And so do Peattie, Wilder, Chatto, Schenk and many other favorite authors. They capture the joy of gardening—and plants in all settings—and make it tangible to us as readers. The result? Books that are an enriching pleasure to read, and read again. I highly recommend them all. ~

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## Union Bay Plan *continued from page 15*

short paths with lookouts to provide access to wetlands, slough and shoreline.

The Union Bay Natural Area, and the adjacent shoreline, are important assets for the natural ecosystems of the Lake Washington basin, for the University, and for the communities around the University. The salmon that return to all the creeks that enter lakes Washington and Sammamish swim through the Montlake Cut, and the return runs of juveniles undoubtedly spend time along our shores, preparing for their journey to the ocean. UBNA is a premier birding area, and we strive to improve the habitat. The site is always filled with people trying to reconnect with nature. School classes are welcome to come for a visit, and we try to help them enjoy their experience by offering tours; such classes may volunteer to remove invasive plants and plant natives, or help maintain existing restoration projects.

UBNA complements the Washington Park Arboretum as a landscape in which people can learn lessons about how to inhabit their land. The management of this urban parcel, with its long history of disturbance and use by people, is something that the University of Washington has always tried to do, and will continue to do, with great responsibility. We have the size, location, surrounding environment, and staff, as well as the educational and academic context to continue to make UBNA an important natural and human site on several scales. Our mission is to continue to help people learn how to live with their natural surroundings in a considerate and supportive way. ~

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